Scientifically She Is Known Merely as the "Dugong."

uliar Mammal Which Is Nearing inction-The Connecting Link Between the Whale and the Seals and Walruses

The latest addition to the mammalia department of the San Francisco academy of science, says the Examiner, is a real mermaid. The strange specimen arrived from Australia a few weeks ago and is now in the bands of the tax idermist. The process of curing and stuffing will be completed in a few days. Then the public may visit the academy and take a good square look at an honest siren of the seas.

Although the animal is the veritable original of the mermald, her scientific name is not so supple on the lips as the soft pet names given to the marine sirens of mythology. She is known as the dugong, and while she is more or less interesting to the naturalist as being the inoffensive cause of the mermaid myths, she is still more interesting to him because she is a dugong. For the dugong has been battling for existence in the marine lose her identity among her aquatic neighbors of the southern deep. The dugong is becoming rapidly extinct. A specimen is seldom captured and the one in the possession of the academy Every nation under the sun has con-

is regarded as an extraordinary prize. atee family of mammalia to a beautiful sea siren with languorous eyes and flowing hair, who wooes foolish mariners to destruction, and the folk lore of every nation has a different idea of the appearance of the mermaid. The crafty Chinese and Japanese have even many metured. inctured a hideous semblance to a woman fish, and great painters have DICSS. deigned to commit to canvas their conception of the siren. The unattractive motherly dugong was the cause of it

The dugong forms the connecting link between the real whale and the scals and walruses. Like the whale the unimal has no hind feet, but a powerful horizontal tail. Its anterior extremities are more flexibly jointed



DUGONG NURSING HER YOUNG. than those of the whale, and this is a

distinguishing characteristic between the two animals. The dugong is said to have attained a length of twenty feet, but the usual length is from eight to twelve feet. The specimen at the academy is nearly seven feet long and has been very well preserved. In appearance the animal resembles

the manatee or sea cow. Its upper lip is large, thick and fleshy, and its snout is like the trunk of an elephant cut short across.

When the young its breasts are enlarged so as to nursing process is carried on by the mother above water. The baby dugong is pressed against the exposed mal swims horizontally through the water, using her remaining flipper to propel horself along. It is this singular chareful for the animal that has given rise to the fable of the mer-

Sir James Emerson Tennent, the eminent naturalist; says: "The rude and approach to the human outline observable in the shape of the head of this Advertise creature, and the attitude of the mother while suckling her young, holding It to her breast with one flipper and, while swimming with the other, holdand, when disturbed, suddenly diving and displaying her fish-like tail-these, together with her habitual demonstrations of strong maternal affection, probably gave rise to the fable of the mermaid.

Tennent traces the origin of the myth to the gilt-edged tales of early Arabian sailors who had watched the strange antics of the dugong in the waters of the Manaar.

Still another characteristic of the animal that contributed to its immortalization in mythology and heraldry is the peculiarly human-like, plaintive ery which it gives when its young is imperiled or becomes detached from its motherly but muscular hold. According to Ruppell, it was with the I am sorry to leave my flock but I skin of this mammal that the Jews must obey the call. were directed to veil the temple.

The best proof that the dugong has been but imperfectly described by naturalists is the contradictory accounts given by scientists. Tennent says it gives no oil whatsoever, and the author of "Wonders of the Deep" declares that 4,000 bottles of oil have been obtained from one dugong. It is a sort of marine cosmopolite, for it has been found in the northern seas, along the tropical coasts and streams of Africa and America, in the Red ses and the Indian ocean.

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He Knew the Game

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